Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – February 16, 2022

REPORTS

Item No. 5 Declaration of International Decade of Indigenous Languages

COUNCIL DECISION:

On January 27, 2022, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by Councillor Chambers,
Seconded by Councillor Lukes,

WHEREAS International Mother Language Day has been proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1999, for every year to be celebrated on February 21st;

AND WHEREAS throughout the course of history, many individuals have fought to protect linguist rights and freedoms. UNESCO selected February 21st in honour of the Bangladeshi people's sacrifices made to protect their mother language;

AND WHEREAS countries throughout the world celebrate linguistic diversity and multilingual education; language is a critical component of ones' identity and culture; by recognizing mother languages, we cultivate understanding, which in turn helps create more inclusive societies and a world richer in cultural experiences;

AND WHEREAS Winnipeg has defined itself as a Human Rights City through its leadership and its ongoing work of collaborating with all groups to grow our knowledge and commitment towards making the vision a reality; by recognizing mother languages, we cultivate understanding, which in turn helps create more inclusive societies and a world richer in cultural experiences;

AND WHEREAS the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages on the premise that Indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation; the Indigenous Languages Act, which is intended to support the reclamation, revitalization, maintaining and strengthening of Indigenous languages in Canada received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019;

AND WHEREAS the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls to action identify and recognize the significance of language rights and preservation of culture; the mother tongue is a substantial part of what defines each of cultural identity; it's a heritage that transports specific knowledge, expressions, feelings, traditions and local history;

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

AND WHEREAS the Welcoming Winnipeg Policy, "Reconciling our History" Policy was unanimously adopted by Council on January 30, 2020, to resolve the absence of Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and contributions to the stories remembered and commemorated in the city. One of the objectives of the policy is to support changes that promote Indigenous reclamation of land, space and/or language;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Council acknowledge February 21st, 2022 as Mother Language Day, dedicated to the protection and preservation of languages and cultures;

2. That to be consistent with the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/74/135) which proclaimed the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, to draw global attention on the critical situation of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion, that the City of Winnipeg declare the decade as International Decade of Indigenous Languages;

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.